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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3025

INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2047

RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2168

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0710

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1445

RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1803

RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2224

RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4655

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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 HARARE 000512

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL

ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS

STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM KDEM ZI

SUBJECT: ZIM VIOLENCE AND ARRESTS, IN DETAIL

**¶1.** (SBU) SUMMARY. The Mugabe regime's political crackdown ahead of the June 27 presidential run-off is increasingly targeting opposition leadership. On June 12, presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai was twice detained by police while attempting to campaign, bringing the total to four detentions in eight days. Tsvangirai was released late that evening. Also on June 12, MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti was arrested upon his return to Zimbabwe from South Africa and charged with treason in addition to outstanding charges of communicating statements prejudicial to the State; he continues to be held incommunicado. On June 9, Tsvangirai held a press conference denouncing the violence and harassment in which he reported that 66 MDC supporters have been killed, 200 remain missing, 3,000 have sought medical treatment for injuries and at least 25 thousand have been displaced during the ZANU-PF campaign. At least eight MDC MPs have been arrested or detained in the aftermath of the March 29 national elections in which the combined opposition won a majority of seats in parliament. Women, children and the elderly relatives of MDC officials have also been singled out for beatings and even death in an ongoing attempt to intimidate would-be MDC voters and shake the foundations of the party's infrastructure. Without a major shift in the current environment brought about by mass domestic and international monitoring delegations, chances for a free and fair June contest are minute. END SUMMARY.

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Top tier targeted  
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**¶2.** (SBU) On June 12, Morgan Tsvangirai and his election staff were twice detained by police while attempting to campaign in central Zimbabwe as part of a three week campaign blitz through the countryside. Tsvangirai was first stopped in Kwekwe at a police road block ahead of a planned rally; he was held for several hours and then released. Tsvangirai and staff were again stopped that evening in Gweru, where they were taken to a police station. Police searched the two MDC campaign buses before releasing the opposition members at 10:30pm on orders to return in the morning with paperwork for

the vehicles. On June 13, police reportedly found "irregularities" with the paperwork for the campaign buses (which were registered in South Africa) and impounded them. MDC lawyers are currently working to secure the release of the buses. These detentions mark the fourth time in eight days that Tsvangirai has been stopped and held by police, typically for the duration of what was intended to be an MDC rally.

¶3. (SBU) Also on June 12, MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti was arrested upon his return to Zimbabwe from nearly two months of self-imposed exile in South Africa. Biti reported from Johannesburg that he expected to be arrested upon arrival on an outstanding warrant charging he communicated statements prejudicial to the State by announcing that Tsvangirai had won the March 29 contest ahead of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, as prohibited by the Electoral Act. Biti was reportedly taken from the Harare International Airport airplane ramp-way by plain-clothed security officers to an unknown location. Biti has been charged with treason, which carries the death penalty, in addition to the previous charge; he is currently being held incommunicado. His lawyers report they suspect he is in Harare and plan to file an urgent High Court petition demanding access on June 13.

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Terror unleashed  
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¶4. (U) At a June 9 press conference that followed the

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convening of the MDC's national executive meeting, Morgan Tsvangirai stated that the MDC "as a party" condemned the government's ongoing campaign of violence against opposition supporters, noting that "the country has experienced a de facto coup d'etat and is now effectively run by a military junta." Citing a "terror unleashed on the people," Tsvangirai stated that 66 MDC supporters have been killed by government agents since the March 29 national elections and that 200 remain missing, with some 3,000 having sought medical treatment and at least 25 thousand displaced. Party leadership, candidates and polling agents were particularly targeted for attacks.

¶5. (U) Tsvangirai denied rumors of secret talks between the MDC and ZANU-PF on a possible government of national unity and insisted that the MDC was focused solely on the run-off. "No one can change the process for the run-off," he stated, "unless Mugabe steps down or collapses." Despite ZANU-PF infiltration of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission with loyal security forces and attempts to abuse the postal voting system by forcing the army and police to vote for Mugabe, Tsvangirai called the ruling party's campaign a "doomsday strategy," and remained confident that the MDC would win: "Even if I stay home from now until the election, Mugabe will still lose. The people have spoken."

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Eight MDC MPs arrested/detained  
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¶6. (SBU) Despite securing a majority of seats in the House of Assembly, numerous MDC MPs and one senator have been arrested, detained or gone into hiding since the announcement of presidential election results on May 2. These accounts illustrate a pattern of charging MDC officials with inciting violence, the State automatically appealing bail when it is granted, and police who do not follow court orders when bail is granted. Cumulatively, these eight MPs from seven provinces have spent more than 45 nights in jail.

Eric Matinenga, MP-elect from Buhera West  
Arrested: May 31, 2008  
Charges: Inciting public violence. In his court hearing on June 4, 2008, the magistrate refused to put him on remand,

saying the State had failed to provide any evidence against him. She dropped the charges against him.

Released: June 5, 2008

Re-arrested: June 7, 2008

Charges: The same public violence charges that the magistrate dropped days earlier.

Ordered released: Monday June 9, 2008. However, as of June 11, Matinenga remains in jail as police refuse to comply with the court order.

Norman Mpofu, MP-elect from Bulilima East and

Lutho Tapela, Senator-elect from Bulilima-Mangwe

Detained: May 24, 2008 in Plumtree with two local activists.

Accused of holding an illegal meeting.

Charges: None filed

Released: May 27, 2008

Amos Chibaya, MP-elect from Gweru

Detained and Released May 21, 2008

Charges: "Undermining public confidence in the police force" for comments he made at a rally about police officers having voted for MDC.

Iain Kay, MP-elect from Marondera Central

Arrested: May 20, 2008

Charges: Inciting violence. Kay is accused of masterminding violence in Mashonaland East. He was held for more than 48

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hours before being formally charged. When he did appear in court, the State appealed bail, which was eventually granted.

Released on bail: June 2, 2008

Heya Shoko, MP-elect from Bikita West

Detained and Released May 12, 2008 after being held for four hours.

Charges: Public violence. He was accused of involvement in violence and arson.

Misheck Shoko, MP-elect from Chitungwiza South

Detained and Released May 12, 2008

Charges: Inciting violence. Accused of planning to raid a ZANU-PF youth militia base in Seke.

Trevor Saruwaka, MP-elect from Mutasa Central

Arrested: May 11, 2008 at Penhalonga Police Station.

Saruwaka had gone to the station to look for an MDC youth abducted by war veterans. He was ordered arrested at the police station.

Charges: Inciting violence

Awarded bail: May 14, 2008

Released from jail: May 20, 2008

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Lower- and mid-level activists murdered  
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¶7. (SBU) In addition to targeting of high-profile MDC officials and MPs, there are reports of a plethora of attacks, including torture and murder, on lower-level candidates and activists as part of the Mugabe regime's systematic attempt to collapse the opposition's grassroots network. The following are just some examples:

On May 22, Shepherd Jani, the MDC treasurer in Mashonaland East, was abducted from the sidewalk in Murehwa and pushed into a truck by four men suspected of being intelligence officers. Jani's mutilated body was found two days later, Tsvangirai attended his funeral in Murehwa on May 28.

Beta Chokururama, a member of the MDC national youth, was found dead in Chikwaka village, Mashonaland East on May 14. He and two other MDC activists, Cain Nyevhe and Godfrey Kauzani, had been abducted on May 13 by two full Toyota trucks with no license plates. Nyevhe and Kauzani's bodies were found on May 18 in Goromonzi; at their funerals in

Harare on May 21, ZANU-PF supporters attacked some of the MDC mourners.

On May 14, Tonderai Ndira, MDC Secretary for Security in the Youth Assembly, was abducted from his home in a high density suburb of Harare. His mutilated body was found on May 21 in Goromonzi. Ndira was a well-known MDC activist who had been arrested more than 30 times. Tsvangirai attended his funeral in Harare on May 25.

In Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central, a group of 70 villagers was beaten and tortured on May 5; six were killed. One of the men killed, Joseph Madzuramhende, was allegedly told that his crime was having a radio where villagers came to listen to Studio 7 (the popular Voice of America radio program). He was severely beaten and tortured for several hours by six ZANU-PF youths before he died.

MDC activist Tabitha Marume was shot and killed on April 25 in Manicaland when a group of war veterans opened fire on a group of MDC supporters. Marume and 21 other MDC supporters had gone to a torture camp to seek the release of 12 MDC members who had been abducted by war veterans on April 23. When they attempted to release their colleagues, they were

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confronted by 50 war vets and ZANU-PF youths, 12 with AK-47s.

As they attempted to flee, three, including Marume, were shot. According to eye witnesses, retired Colonel Daniel Romeo Mutsvunguma, the former Zimbabwean Defense Attaché in Washington, fired the fatal shot that killed Marume.

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Families targeted  
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¶8. (SBU) The targeting of family members and others close to MDC leaders appears to be increasingly employed as a tactic of intimidation and coercion. In both rural and urban areas, women, children and the elderly have not been exempted from ZANU-PF's campaign of murder, beatings, and displacement in an attempt to further weaken the opposition's structural framework ahead of the run-off. The following are confirmed recent attacks carried out on those in the MDC orbit:

On June 10, the home of MP Blessing Chebundo in Hurungwe, Karoi was set on fire by ZANU-PF supporters. Chebundo's family members were injured in the blaze and his younger brother is missing.

On June 7, a ZANU-PF mob murdered the wife of Patson Chipiro, Chairman for Mhondoro Ngezi, by cutting off her hands and legs, dragging her body into the kitchen and setting it on fire. The attack was reportedly ordered by Deputy Information Minister Bright Matonga, the ZANU-PF MP for Mhondoro Ngezi.

On June 6, the home of Brian Mamhova, the District Councilor for Ward 1 in Harare South, was set on fire by ZANU-PF supporters who arrived in four packed vehicles. The mob was reportedly promised Z\$25 trillion (approximately US\$12,500) to kill Mamhova, who escaped unharmed with his brother and nephew. However, Mamhova's pregnant wife and six-year-old son perished in the fire and his neighbors were beaten. Police were uncooperative when asked to investigate and Mamhova remains in hiding.

On June 1, the family of Piniel Denga, the MP Elect for Mbare in Harare was attacked by a group of ZANU-PF supporters. Denga's brother, nephews and nieces were force-marched from the family homestead in Chivu to a torture camp in Chipisa, where they were told to denounce the MDC. They were then beaten with logs; Denga's brother suffered a broken leg, his niece a broken hand and others received lacerations to their bodies.

On May 30, MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa's 78-year-old grandmother, mother and brother were assaulted by armed soldiers who raided their home in Gutu South. The attackers then beat other family members living in the area. Major General Englebert Rugejo was reportedly responsible for ordering the attack.

On May 26, Mabel Penisara, the wife of MP Iain Kay's campaign manager, was abducted and tortured by 20 ZANU-PF thugs. She was left naked by a roadside, where she was found alive on May 28.

On May 13, war veterans abducted the parents of exiled MDC official Elliot Pfevbe in Nyakatondo village in Mt. Darwin. Pfevbe's 79-year-old father and 76-year-old mother were tied up with wire and taken, along with several other family members, to a reported torture camp at Nyakatondo Primary School. Amnesty International stated it would help investigate the case; however, there is no further information available at this time. The Pfevbe's have been the target of politically-motivated violence before: In 2000,

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during one of Elliot's campaigns, his brother Matthew was abducted from the family's home and killed, and Pfevbe's father was injured, both allegedly by armed ZANU-PF supporters.

¶9. (SBU) COMMENT: The confirmed cases above, though just a few of the myriad incidents reported since the March 29 elections, demonstrate the breadth and depth of the government's effort to eliminate political space for the opposition. ZANU-PF supporters act with total impunity to carry out the orders of, in many cases, senior level officials. Free and fair elections are impossible under current conditions and we have no sign that in the coming days things will improve. The arrival and active engagement of a full contingent of domestic and international observers remains imperative if Zimbabwe is to have any chance at a credible run-off. END COMMENT.

McGee